

“He that *judgeth* a matter before he *heareth* it, is
not wise.”

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THE ONLY WAY TO BE SAVED.

“THE WAYFARING MAN, THOUGH A FOOL, NEED NOT ERR THEREIN.”

AN EXPLANATION

OF THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE

OF

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

OF

LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

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Peter (Acts ii.) preached the same order of things, as above mentioned, when he says, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;" that is, be born of *water*, then ye shall be born of Spirit. Paul himself, though he had a vision of the Lord Jesus, yet he received *not* the Holy Ghost; he did not receive religion, until he had washed his sins away through baptism, as administered by Ananias. There is one instance, and but one, where the Holy Ghost was given before baptism—I mean, in the Apostolic dispensation. Cornelius and his friends, who had assembled together to hear the message from Peter, received the Holy Ghost previous to baptism—Acts x. 44.

This was done, however, to convince Peter that the Gentiles had a right to receive Gospel privileges. Cornelius and his friends were Gentiles, and Peter would not have baptized them, unless he had first seen the power of God resting upon them. He looked upon the Gentiles as heathen, and too wicked and sinful to receive Gospel privileges with the people of God—the Jewish nation. He did not imagine they were to receive the Holy Ghost, and thereby be prepared to sit down in the kingdom of God, with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the Jewish prophets; but, when he saw the Holy Ghost resting upon them, being astonished, he immediately exclaims—Can any man forbid *water*, that these should not be baptized? He then commanded them to be baptized. This receiving the Holy Ghost, before baptism, was an exception to a general rule, and arose from peculiar circumstances, as I have shown. God, if he sees fit can depart from a general rule, and confer blessings; but man has not this privilege; he must observe the order laid down, or he can have no claims upon the promise. After Elisha had laid down the order, whereby Naaman could obtain removal of his leprosy, God, if he had chosen, could have removed it some other way; but, at the same time, Naaman could not have claims upon the blessing, until he had taken the course marked out.—See 2nd Kings, chap. 5. If we will observe the order of the Gospel, a promise is left us, we shall have its blessings, otherwise, we have no claims to urge; and it is worse than folly for men to say, Lord, Lord, and do not his commandments.

It is plainly manifest, that *external* works must be attended to, as well as faith and repentance, in order to receive Gospel privileges.

Baptism in water, forming a part of the Gospel of Christ, we notice therefore, that the servants of God, in early ages, were very particular in attending to its administrations; also, it is evident, that unless peculiar blessings actually were experienced, through baptism, they would have neglected enforcing its observance. If, as some suppose, that faith, repentance, and prayer, answer the purpose, in receiving the fulness of Gospel privileges, then it is very evident, that baptism was a vain and useless work, and had no need to be observed. Naaman would have been performing a vain and foolish work, when washing seven times in Jordan's waters, had it been in his power to have been recovered from his affliction merely through faith, repentance, and prayer. Also, Noah and family were very foolish in performing an external work, in building an Ark, provided they could have obtained the same blessing through faith, repentance, and prayer. Furthermore, the Israelites, could they have obtained forgiveness of sins, through faith, repentance, and prayer, it would have been folly in them to offer up animals for that purpose. So also, under the Gospel dispensation, those three thousand people, on the day of Pentecost, that were baptized in one day, were very unwise and foolish in submitting to the trouble of baptism, provided the same blessings could have been realized by exercising only faith, repentance, and prayer. The Eunuch would not have alighted from his carriage, and accompanied Phillip into the water, if nothing had been required in receiving Gospel blessings but inward works; neither would Ananias have commanded Saul

to arise and be baptized, washing away his sins, unless he had known assuredly, that baptism, an outward work, must necessarily accompany the inward works of faith and repentance, in order that Saul might come into and obtain possession of Gospel privileges. Paul would not have baptized those twelve men, alluded to in Acts xix., if mental operations could have given them the gift of the Holy Ghost (1st Cor. i. 14) ; neither would he have baptized the household of Stephanas ; also, Crispus and Gaius, and permitted Apollos to water, or baptize those whom he planted or enlightened (1st Cor. iii. 4), unless baptism had been absolutely essential to receiving Gospel privileges ; nor would Peter when speaking of Noah and family being saved by water, have said—The like figure whereunto even baptism doth now save us (1st Peter, iii. 21) ; nor would Christ have said, Except ye are born of water and of the Spirit, ye cannot enter the kingdom of God. I might multiply proofs of this kind, but I dare say sufficient has already been said in proof that baptism is absolutely necessary with faith and repentance.

We will now occupy a moment in endeavouring to obtain a proper view of the mode in which baptism was administered. It is quite evident that there was but one way or mode in which this ordinance was to be administered, and that mode was explained to the apostles, and strictly adhered to in all their administrations. In order that we may obtain a proper notion of this subject, it will be necessary to refer to the circumstances under which baptism was administered.

It says of John, that he baptized at Ænon, because there there was much water ; then, if sprinkling had been the mode, we can hardly suppose he would have gone to Ænon, because there was much water at that place : for a very little water indeed would have sprinkled all Judea, which he could have obtained without having performed a journey to Ænon. We are told, also, that he baptized in Jordan, and that, after the ordinance, was administered to our Saviour, he came up out of the water, expressly signifying that he had been down into the water, in order that the ordinance might be administered in a proper manner. Again, it speaks of the Eunuch, that he went down into the water with Philip, and then came up out of the water. Now, it must be acknowledged, by every one who makes any pretensions to reason and consistency, that had sprinkling a little water on the forehead answered the purpose, then those persons never would have gone into the water to receive the ordinance. Paul, in writing to the saints, gives us a plain testimony in favour of immersion—(2d Col. 12th verse ; also, 6th Romans, 4th verse). That apostle states there, that the saints had been buried with Christ by baptism.

It is plainly evident they could not have been buried by baptism, without having been entirely overwhelmed or covered in water. An object cannot be said to be buried when any portion of it remains uncovered ; so, also, a man is not buried in water by baptism, unless his whole person is put into the watery element. This explanation of the apostle, upon the mode of baptism, very beautifully corresponds with that given by our Saviour—Except ye be born of water, &c. To be born of a thing signifies being placed in that thing, and emerging or coming forth from it ; to be born of water must also signify being placed in the womb of waters, and being brought forth again. I trust sufficient has already been said to convince every reasonable and unprejudiced mind, that immersion was the mode in which the ordinance of baptism was administered in the early days of Christianity, when the Gospel was proclaimed in its purity and fulness ; therefore, I will close my observations upon this point.

We learn, from 6th Hebrews, that the laying on of hands was enumerated among the principles of the Gospel. It is known by all, that this ordinance,

as well as baptism for the remission of sins, by immersion, is quite neglected at the present day in the Christian churches ; a few remarks, therefore, upon this subject I hope will prove profitable. We have several instances where Christ laid his hands upon the sick and healed them ; and, in his commission to the apostles, last chapter of Mark, he says—These signs shall follow them that believe ; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover, &c. Ananias laid his hands on Saul, who immediately received his sight, after this ordinance was administered. Paul, when shipwrecked upon the island of Melita, laid his hands upon the father of Publius, the governor of the island, and healed him of a fever. These few remarks show clearly that laying on of hands has been appointed of God, to be a medium through which heavenly blessings may be obtained.

Although the healing of the sick was connected with the administration of this ordinance, yet, when we pursue the subject farther, we shall discover that a still greater blessing was connected with this ordinance. We are told that, in the city of Samaria, men and women had been baptized by Philip, which caused great rejoicing in those baptized. They probably were rejoicing in consequence of having received remission of sins, through faith, repentance, and baptism, and of receiving some portion of the Holy Spirit of God, which naturally followed them, after having obtained the answer of a good conscience, by the remission of their sins. Through this portion of the Holy Spirit, which they came in possession of, they began to see the kingdom of God. For, it will be recollected that our Saviour has declared—That no man can see the kingdom of God, unless he is born again ; and, in the verse following, he says—He cannot enter into it except he is born twice ; first of water, then of the Spirit. Now, those people at Samaria had been born of water—they had received the first birth, therefore they were in a state of seeing the kingdom of God, of contemplating, with the eye of faith, its various blessings, privileges, and glories ; but, as they had not been born the second time, that is, of the Spirit, they had not entered into the kingdom of God—they had not entered into possession of Gospel privileges in their fulness. When the apostles at Jerusalem heard of the success of Philip, they sent Peter and John to Samaria, for the purpose of administering the laying on of hands. Accordingly, when they arrived at Samaria, they laid their hands upon those that had been baptized, and they received the Holy Ghost. Simon the sorcerer, perceiving the Holy Ghost was given through the laying on of hands, offered the apostles money, if they would confer upon him the authority of administering that sacred ordinance ; so it is plainly evident that those people in Samaria were born of the Spirit, were introduced into the Gospel kingdom—into possession of Gospel privileges—by means of laying on of hands. We will adduce another instance of the kind. It is found recorded in Acts xix. Paul, we are told there, found twelve brethren at Ephesus, upon whom he laid his hands, and they received the Holy Ghost immediately, viz., through this ordinance they were born spiritually into the kingdom of God ; for previous to this they had seen the kingdom of God, having been born of water only.

This then was the Gospel order in the days of the apostles, belief on Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost. When this order was understood, and properly attended to, power, gifts, blessings, and glorious privileges followed immediately ; and in every age and period, when these steps are properly attended to, and observed in their proper place and order, the same blessings are sure to follow ; but, when neglected, either wholly or in part, there will be, either an entire absence of those blessings, or a great diminishing of them. Christ, in his commission to the

apostles, speaks of some supernatural gifts that those receive that yielded obedience to this order of things.—See Mark, last Chapter. Paul (Cor. i.) gives a more full account of the various gifts that attended the fulness of the Gospel: he mentions nine of them, and informs us they are the effects or fruits of the Holy Ghost. Now the Holy Ghost was promised unto all, even as many as the Lord should call.—See Acts ii. This gift being unchangeable in its nature and operations, and being inseparably connected by promise to this scheme or order of things, it becomes reasonable, consistent, and Scriptural, to anticipate the same gifts and blessings; and if Noah, after having built the Ark, could claim and obtain his temporal salvation according to promise; or Joshua, having compassed Jericho the number of times mentioned, could go up upon her prostrated walls and make captive her inhabitants; or the Israelites, having offered up the sacrifices commanded, could then, as promised, receive forgiveness of their sins; or Naaman, after having complied with the injunction of Elisha, in washing seven times in Jordan's waters, could demand and obtain his recovery; or lastly, the blind man, after having washed in the pool of Siloam, if he could then claim and realise the promised reward, then, I say, with propriety and consistency, that whenever a man will lay aside his prejudice and sectarian notions, and false traditions, and conform to the whole order of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, then there is nothing beneath the celestial worlds that will operate against claiming and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and all the blessings connected with the Gospel in the apostolic age. To obtain religion that will save us in the presence of God, we must obtain the Holy Ghost, and, in order to obtain the Holy Ghost, we must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, then repent of our sins, that is, forsake them, then go forward and be immersed in water for the remission of sins, then receive the laying on of hands. But there is one thing which I have not noticed, and it is something of great importance. What I allude to is, that concerning the authority of administering the ordinances of baptism and laying on of hands. Unless they are administered by one who is actually sent of God, the same blessings will not follow. The apostles and seventies were ordained by Jesus Christ to administer in the ordinances of the Gospel, through which the gifts and blessings of the eternal worlds were to be enjoyed. Hence, Christ says to the Apostles.—Whosoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted; and whosoever sins ye retain, they shall be retained: that is, every man that would come, in humility, sincerely repenting of his sins, and receive baptism from the apostles, should have his sins forgiven through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, and through the laying on of hands, should receive the Holy Ghost; but those that would refuse receiving this order of things from the apostles would have their sins remain upon them. In view of this Paul says—We are savours of life unto life, or of death unto death. He was a minister of life unto those who received the Gospel, which he had authority to administer—but a minister of death to those refusing compliance. This power and authority of administering the Gospel was conferred upon others by the apostles, so that the apostles were not the only ones who held this responsible office. And every man, in every age, who holds the authority of administering the fulness of the Gospel, becomes, in this respect, like the apostles, viz.—messengers of life unto life, or death unto death, according as his message shall be received or rejected. Now, until some one can be found that holds an office like this, some one having authority to baptize and lay hands on, no one is under any obligation to receive those ordinances, nor need he expect the blessings, unless they have been administered legally.

It is very evident that the authority of administering in Gospel ordinances has been lost for many centuries; for no man can have this authority, except

he receive it by direct revelation ; either by the voice of God, as Moses did ; or, by the ministering of angels, as John the Baptist received his message ; or, by the gift of prophecy, as Paul and Barnabas received theirs—Acts, xiii. 2. Now, it is plain, that men have denied immediate revelation for many hundred years past ; consequently have not received them, and therefore could not have been sent of God to administer in the fulness of the Gospel. God never sends a man on business, except he reveal himself to that man—never sends a man with a message (in other words), unless he reveal that message to him in a direct manner. The church established by the apostles, gradually fell away, wandered into the *wilderness*, and lost its authority, its priesthood, and departing from the order of God, it lost, also, its gifts and graces ; it transgressed the laws, and changed the ordinances of the Gospel ; changed immersion into sprinkling, and quite neglected laying on of hands ; despised prophecy, and disbelieved in *signs* following.—Rev. xii. 6. Isaiah xxiv. 5. In consequence of this, the Gentiles have been cut off from the fulness of the Gospel privileges, as Paul said to them in Romans xi. 22. “*If you continue not in the goodness of God, you also shall be cut off.*”

John in his Revelations, having seen and spoken of the wandering of the church into darkness, and the beast, the Gentiles making war against the saints and overcoming them (xiii. 7), speaks, in chap. xiv. 5. 6, of the restoration of the Gospel—“I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth.” So it is evident that prophecy was to be fulfilled at some time previous to our Saviour’s second advent.

That those, into whose hands this Tract may fall, shall be without excuse in the great and coming day of the Lord, I now bear testimony, having the highest assurance, by revelation from God, that this prophecy has already been fulfilled, that an *Angel from God* has visited man in these last days, and restored that which has long been lost, even the priesthood,—the keys of the kingdom,—the fulness of the everlasting Gospel—and commanded men to cry, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go you out to meet him ;” to call upon the wise virgins (Mat. xxv. 6.) to arise from their slumber, be baptised for the remission of sins, that they might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and thereby “trim up their lamps,” and thus be prepared to stand when the Bridegroom shall appear, for, saith Malachi iii, 2. “Who may *abide* the day of his coming ? Who shall stand when he appeareth ? for, *He is like refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap.*”—Answer, those that now repent of their sins and receive the *message* God is sending, those that will forsake their false traditions, and come out from under the *blighting* and *benighting* influence of a *hireling* priesthood whom God has not sent, and with whom *he is not* well pleased. I say, and now bear testimony, in the name of Jesus Christ, that the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has sent me to say unto you, “Come out of her, O ye people of God, O ye wise virgins, or else you must *partake* of her iniquities, and you must receive of her plagues.—(Rev. xviii. 4) I say, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost having borne witness, that the anger of God is kindled against the abominations, hypocrisy, and wickedness of the religious world, and from the heavens has he uttered his voice in *anger* against those who “*divine* for money and *teach* for hire ;” and unless they speedily repent, and be baptized for the remission of their sins, receiving the message the Almighty is now sending unto all people, they will be destroyed by the brightness of the coming of the Son of man, which is now at hand—even at your doors—O ye inhabitants of the earth !!!